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TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU PREL KPAO
SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2010

Media Highlights

US Embassy Ankara - Turkey Media Reaction - February 8, 2010 as prepared by the Public Affairs Information Office

News Alert: Several television channels reported Tuesday morning that FM Davutoglu said he is considering a trip to Iran this evening, following his phone conversation this morning with Iranian FM Mottaki.

How the US is Playing

US and France Push the Buttons for Harsher Iran Sanctions (Hurriyet)

Turkish media is awash with stories of Iran's latest response to international demands, with some clanging the bell of concern for Turkey. In "Iran Alarms the World," mainstream Hurriyet says "Iran fakes the super powers again," and notes "Western powers signal tougher new sanctions against Iran while Iran argues it needs to power medical reactor for cancer patients." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet in front page headline alerts "Iran Challenges the World," and says "against all reactions, Iran both arms itself and prepares to open new nuclear plants" in March and will begin enriching uranium on February 16. In "US Pushes the Button for Sanctions While Iran Goes For Higher Enrichment," liberal Radikal highlights "Iran's uranium enrichment draws fresh sanctions calls." Mainstream Sabah in "Missile Defense System in Turkey," cites a NY Times story that said "if Iran possesses nuclear arms, Turkey will move toward a nuclear program. And only a US missile defense system would prevent this." Meanwhile, CNNTurk and NTV report "Turkish FM Davutoglu leaves for Tehran tonight to discuss Iran's nuclear program." Utku Cakirozer in mainstream Aksam observes an obvious contradiction between Ankara's good will mission and Iranian leadership crisis: "At this point, Ankara has started feeling uneasy about this. Therefore, the Turkish government is keeping a very close eye on upcoming events planned to mark the anniversary of the Iranian revolution on February 11."

Afghanistan: Civilians on the Run
Accompanied by photos of desparately fleeing civilians, Turkish media give prominent play to the pending NATO operation in Afghanistan. Mainstream Milliyet reports in "Joint Escape has

Started" that as NATO prepares for its largest offensive yet, civilian residents of Helmand province are running away from their homes, noting that "although no definite time is given for the operation, civilians were warned by brochures thrown from US planes to leave the area." Mainstream Sabah headlines "Tense Waiting in Afghanistan" and reports that "thousands of Afghans left Marja town of Helmand province already to run away from the NATO operation that is expected to start in few days time."

Islamist-oriented/pro-government Zaman says "Big Escape Prior to NATO Operation" and cites Associated Press to say that NATO planes threw brochures from air to warn Taliban commanders that "if they don't leave the region, they would be killed." Zaman adds that more than 10,000 US and British troops, along with Afghan forces, also will participate in the front."

US, EU to Monitor Terror Financing (Sabah)

Mainstream Sabah reports the US National Security Advisor James Jones "called the European Parliament to duty" for allowing American inspectors to investigate EU banking data. "The 'Terror Funds Monitor Program' to be voted in the European Parliament on February 11 is a step and cooperation toward protecting the US and Europe from international terrorist attacks," said Jones. Sabah comments European Parliament members to take part in the voting were "abstinent."

Babacan: Turkey Considering Obama's Bank Reform Plan

Mainstream Sabah reports that at a press conference, Deputy PM Babacan said that Turkey managed the last century's biggest economic crisis very successfully. Babacan also supported President Obama's plan which considers certain limitations for the over-sized banks

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and said "Similar plans could be considered for Turkey. We already started talks with the relevant organizations."

EUCOM and Munich Conference Observations

In mainstream Milliyet, Asli Aydintasbas recounts (2/8) her Munich Security Conference impressions, arguing that "the world is still run by white men over the age of 65, even though the Cold War is over and the global balances have shifted." The writer observes Supreme Allied Commander Admiral James Stavridis with admiration for reading literature, for being in Facebook, and for being an open-minded person in general. She writes: "The concept of a general in Facebook made me think how our generals are closed to communication." The columnist concludes her article by talking about the busy schedule of Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu at the conference, stressing that in their contacts with the Iranians regarding the nuclear issue, "Turkish diplomats insist on seeing the glass full half, and believe that they can persuade the Iranians, while the Europeans see these contacts as a waste of time."

First AWACS Will Be Received in 2011 (Sabah)

Mainstream Sabah reports that the first of AWACS planes (Early Warning and Control plane) will be coming to Turkey, in the latest, next year. Qualification and approval tests of this first plane will start in March. It is expected that, following the necessary tests, the first AWACS plane will be in Turkish Air Force's inventory by the end of this year or, latest in 2011. The agreement for four planes and one support system was signed with the Boeing company in 2003. Equipped with the highest technology, these planes, have the ability of separating the friendly and hostile planes away hundreds of kilometers, at the high altitude.

In the Headlines

Op-Eds Blast Government's On Turk-Armenia Protocols

Following FM Davutoglu's criticism of the Armenian lobby activities in the US and the Armenian Court's interpretation, columnists dealt with the current phase of the normalization process. In mainstream Hurriyet, Yalcin Dogan calls the Minister's complaint as "crisis foretold" and he expects a complete bang on the wall: "Everything on the protocol is working against Turkey's interests and expectations." Cuneyt Ulsever in the same paper, however, thinks Ankara has no right to lament because "we knew well that protocols did not cover a precondition on Karabakh and also the Armenian Court decision actually does not have to deteriorate the protocol

framework." FM Davutoglu talked about "being caught by surprise" regarding the developments, but Cuneyt Ulsever finds it unconvincing: "I think the Foreign Minister's remarks make a perfect example of Turkish foreign policy's situation, where it is stuck in between an ideological foreign policy and real foreign policy. As a result, Turkey is still trying to please everyone. I suggest to him that pleasing everyone will fail eventually and to do his politics accordingly, instead of questioning coincidences." In Islamist and pro-government Zaman, guest columnist Alin Ozinian questions Ankara's sincerity over the protocols: "Turkey constantly complains about the Armenian court decision. If it wasn't the court decision it is very unlikely that Ankara would have been working toward finalizing the protocols. Instead the process for ratification will be slowed down through parliamentary bureaucracy."

Find Our Fathers' Murderers (Vatan)

Media outlets report that relatives of 19 intellectuals who were murdered in attacks over the last 60 years gathered at a court in Istanbul on Monday to support slain Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink's family. The protestors said the Dink case represents an opportunity to find out the "deep forces within state organs" that have played significant roles in political assassinations. The families plan to send a petition to the Parliament on February 11, asking for the establishment of a parliamentary investigation committee to "research organized political murders that have been committed in Turkey since 1948." The protestors carried banners saying, "For Hrant, For Justice" and "Face the truth." Meanwhile,

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on the Dink case that is continuing, mainstream Aksam writes it was a "scandal" that the police reportedly "forgot" to bring to court a "secret witness" for yesterday's hearing.

Lieberman Criticizes Turkey's "Anti-Israeli" Stance (Hurriyet online)

Mainstream Hurriyet website reports that on Tuesday, the Israeli FM Avigdor Lieberman slammed Turkey for its recent "anti-Israeli" stance, but said Tel Aviv would continue efforts to rebuild ties with long-time ally Ankara. "Every week to sharply condemn Israel, to say Israeli military forces have carried out genocide, to call operations to protect our citizens 'a crime against humanity' ... This sharp anti-Israeli line cannot be repeated every week," Lieberman told Azerbaijan's Lider television during a visit to Baku. "For 10 years we have supported very close and friendly relations with Turkey. The recent changes in Turkey's foreign policy concepts were unexpected to us and not entirely clear. We are doing everything we can in order to preserve relations at their previous, very trustful level and to maintain close cooperation in all areas," emphasized Lieberman.

Jagland: Military Culture and Behavior Patterns Must Change (Sabah) The Council of Europe's new Secretary General Thorbjorn Jagland told mainstream Sabah Turkey must cease closing political parties, and instead ban individuals from politics. Turkey needs to do more in changing its constitution, said Jagland, and stressed the military should also respect and comply with the new laws. "Military members cannot be tried at civilian courts. This is a problem, because according to the superiority of law, everyone should be equal in front of the law," emphasized Jagland. He supported Turkey's Kurdish democratic initiative, adding that the overture would help Ankara in EU membership negotiations. Jagland also noted the best way for fighting against terror would be providing the minorities with civilian, cultural and political rights, "as the Turkish government does today."

Islamist Media Banned from NATO Istanbul Meetings

Islamist-oriented Zaman reports correspondents from daily Zaman and television channels STV and TV-Net, all Islamist-oriented outlets, had been barred from the NATO defense ministers' meeting held in Istanbul on February 4-5. An STV cameraman was taken out of the meetings despite the fact that he had an accreditation card. NATO Spokesman James Appathurai said NATO had nothing to do with the ban, and that it was the doing of the Turkish side.

TV Spotlight (CNN Turk)

Opposition CHP has boycotted a luncheon hosted by Parliament Speaker Mehmet Ali Sahin in the parliament for party deputy group chiefs to broker peace after a recent escalation of tensions in the parliament.

Prime Minister Erdogan will receive the Foreign Ministers of Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Prime Minister Erdogan has told his party members to start preparations for the general elections scheduled for July 2011.

Turkey's Chief EU negotiator Egemen Bagis said EU process was important for Turkey, but stressed Turkey would not sacrifice Cyprus for the sake of EU membership.

President Gul and his wife have visited landmarks in New Delhi in the first day of their visit to India.

Prime Minister Erdogan inaugurated 127 schools in Ankara, and addressed students.

Turkish industrial output has increased by 25.2 percent in December, surpassing all expectations.

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A Turkish Central Bank survey shows yearend inflation to stand at 7.5 percent.

Former PM Viktor Yanukovich has prevailed in Ukraine's presidential elections five years after he was ousted in a populist uprising.

Hamas has met with Russian FM Lavrov for talks on securing Palestinian unity.

In a joint statement, the US and the EU have condemned human rights abuses in Iran.

Swastikas and racial slurs have been painted on the walls of a mosque in the French town of Saint-Etienne.

Pope Benedict XVI plans a visit to Cyprus in June.

JEFFREY